



WISCONSIN LEGISLATURE

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Assembly Committee on Criminal Justice and Corrections

Assembly Bill 263

State Representative Dan Knodl and Scott Krug

October 6, 2011

First, we would like to thank Chairman Bies and the members of the committee for having this hearing to discuss the issues of reimbursement for law enforcement departments when responding to a false report of a crime.

Under current law, a person who is convicted of a crime may be assessed certain costs associated with their crime. These costs include damages to private property and any restitution to a victim.

Our bill would give judges the additional tool of ordering restitution to a police department if the person was convicted of obstructing an officer. Specifically, if they provided false information or placed physical evidence with the specific intent of misleading law enforcement. These false report crimes cost departments large amounts of time and energy to address.

When we contacted our local police departments to get examples we could use for our testimony today; sufficed to say, there wasn't a shortage. One I received was from Germantown. It involved a lady who reported her credit card stolen which subsequently had numerous charges made to it. Following the investigation, the officer acquired photos of the suspect, who the victim could not identify. This person was later identified by the victims friends as the ladies roommate. The lady was actively trying to withhold this information from police, covering up the fact she knew who made the charges.

Simply put, the time and effort wasted responding to a blatant lie by criminals should not fall on the backs of those on the front line working to keep our families and communities safe. Other states have recognized this as an important tool for judges. In fact, Minnesota requires those convicted of false reporting are required "to make full restitution of all reasonable expenses incurred in the investigation." (*Minn. Stat. §609.505*)

If a criminal has taken the steps to send police on a wild goose chase, then they should reimburse the department, instead of having those costs fall to our taxpayers.

We would like to thank the committee for their time and we would be happy to entertain any questions that you may have.